

Poletown Historic District  
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church  
3414 Trombly Ave  
Detroit  
Wayne  
MI

HABS No. MI-275-6

HABS  
MICH  
82- DETROIT,  
32-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON DC, 20240

STATE Michigan	COUNTY Wayne	TOWN OR VICINITY Detroit
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Poletown Historic District Immaculate Conception Catholic Church (church literature)		HABS NO. MI-275-6 NXX.
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE None.		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 3414 Trombly Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1928 (church literature)	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Gustave Mueller, Architect (Walter Roszycki)	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) The building is primarily of architectural significance. It displays an austere Romanesque Revival exterior and an elaborate interior, reflecting the traditions of Polish church architecture. The building is of historic significance for its over fifty years of service to a largely Polish-American parish.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Romanesque Revival		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Masonry wall construction with steel column supports.		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTED) Refer to attached floor plans on Page 4.		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE The building presents a subtle Romanesque Revival design. The facade is composed of three rounded-arched doors, a central circular ornament, and flanking rectangular tiles. The building's most distinctive embellishment is the glazed terra-cotta, which is used extensively in the eaves, string courses, fenestration, the bell tower, (Cont'd on Pg.		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) The interior attains an exuberance typical of Polish church architecture. Colorful tile flooring, dark-stained pews, and stenciled, gold-leafed plastering all combine to form a unique richness. Light emanates from clerestory windows and stained and painted glass windows along the aisles, which is complemented by hanging electrical lamps. (Cont'd on Pg.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES The interior was redecorated in 1952 by the Mondo Studios of New Haven, Michigan. Separate exterior renovations were completed in 1963 and 1970. The renovations led to an anachronistic entrance to the church.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE The building was used as a church previous to its demolition on July 17, 1981.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDE LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.)  (SEE ATTACHED SHEET)		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Theron Francis, William Kessler and Associates, Inc.		DATE July 20, 1981

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

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EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (Cont'd)

and facade iconography.

INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (Cont'd)

A shallow baldachino in the altar is supported by two carved angels. The chancel walls are abundantly decorated with florid paintings, architectural panels of bandwork, cartouches, and garlands. The ceiling contains a series of three frescoes depicting religious scenes.

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HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE: Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

I. Books

1. Paré, George. The Catholic Church in Detroit: 1701-1888. Detroit: The Gabriel Press, 1951.
2. Rev. Swastek, Joseph and Rev. Szopinski, John, Detroit's Oldest Polish Parish: St. Albertus, 1872-1973. Detroit, 1973.

II. Manuscripts and Documents

1. Hodas, Richard, Preliminary Draft - Poletown Historic District. Detroit: (unpublished) October 10, 1980.
2. Poletown A National Register Physical Eligibility Investigation, William Kessler and Associates. Detroit: (unpublished document) 1980.
3. Environmental Impact Statement Central Industrial Park, City of Detroit Community and Economic Development Department. Detroit: December, 1980.

III. Commemorative Publications

1. Ruby Jubilee Immaculate Conception Parish 1919-1959. Detroit: 1959.
2. Golden Jubilee Immaculate Conception Parish 1919-1969. Detroit: 1969.

IV. Reference Book

1. City Directory, R.L. Polk and Co., Publishers. Detroit. (Vols. 1925-1974)

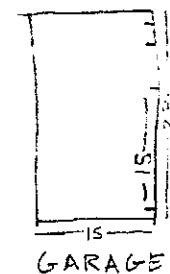
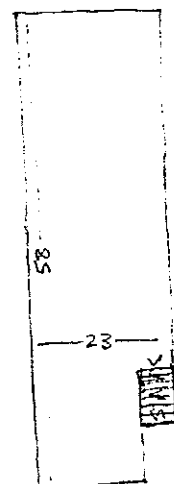
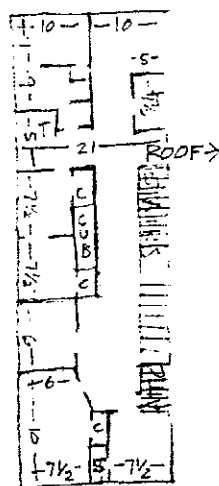
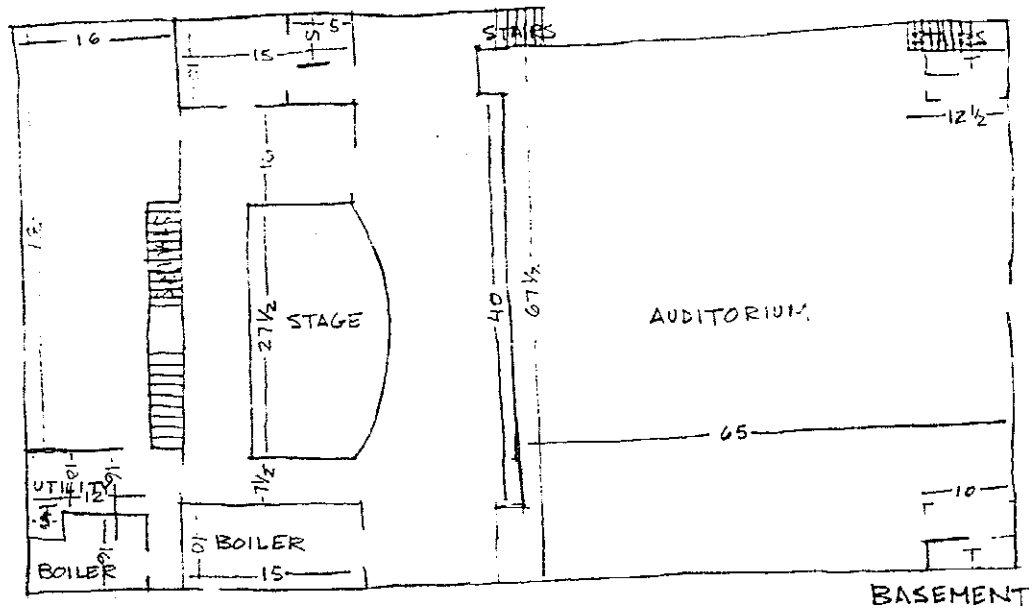
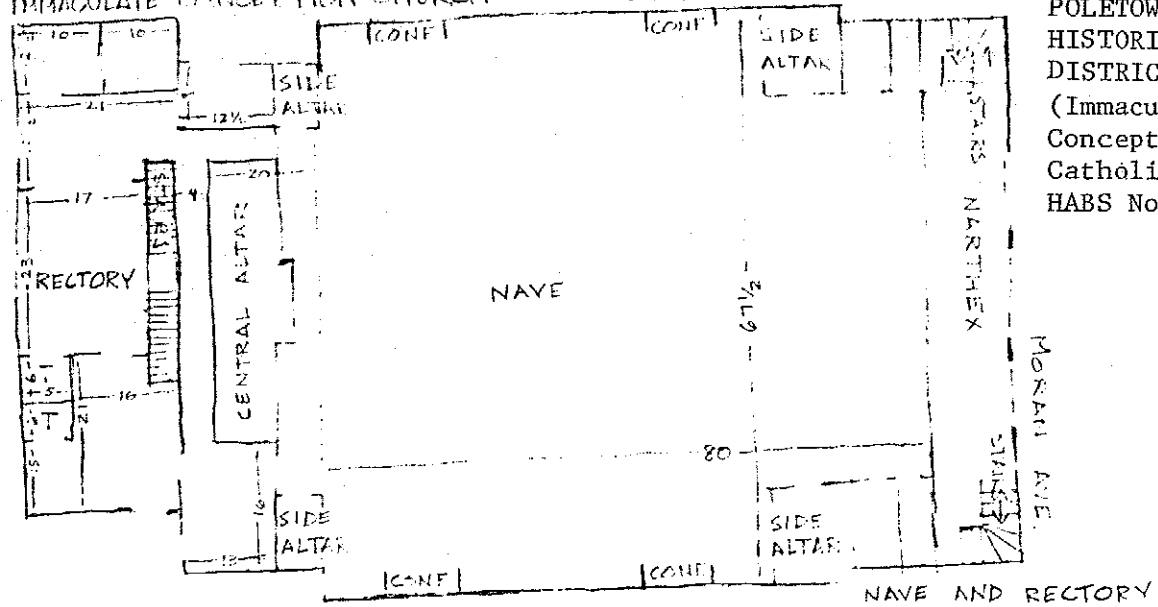
V. Interviews

1. Reverend Karasiewicz, Pastor - Immaculate Conception Church
2. Reverend Francis, Skalski, Pastor - St. Hyacinth's Church

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

3414 TEOMBLY

POLETOWN  
HISTORIC  
DISTRICT  
(Immaculate  
Conception  
Catholic Church)  
HABS No. MI-275-



1. Property Name

Immaculate Conception Church

2. Location

Street Address: 3414 Trombly Avenue, Detroit, Michigan

The property is located at the southwest corner at the intersection of Trombly Avenue and Moran Street. It is situated three blocks north of the Ford Freeway (I-94) and a short distance south of Detroit's Central Industrial Park.

3. Classification

Building

4. Ownership

The Community and Economic Development Department - City of Detroit

5. Representation in Existing Surveys

None

6. Description

The Immaculate Conception Church displays a subtle Romanesque Revival architectural style. The rounded arches of the facade and the square flanking towers are two features of the Romanesque Revival style. String courses of glazed tile ornamentation encompass the dark red integuments of brick, and emphasize the structure's basic, rectangular shape. Having been constructed in the 1920's, Immaculate Conception represents a later example of the Romanesque Revival movement. The north and east sides of the building encroach immediately upon Trombly Avenue and Moran Street, separated only by a conventional sidewalk. To the south, the Church is bounded by an alleyway, beyond which lies the church parking lot and garage. To the west is the church rectory.

The structure's facade exhibits exquisite simplicity. The steps leading to the archways are of anachronistic concrete construction. Above the archways are four glazed tile decorations and a large circular window. Resting at the point of the gable

is a small crucifix. To the sides of the facade are two square towers with glazed tile bell housings.

Adjacent to each tower are ancillary structures, each with rounded arched windows overlooking Moran Street. There are glazed tile string courses following the roofline and the center of the ancillary structures. A row of fire windows near the top of these ancillary structures have been sealed with brick(s). Two rounded-arched windows are set central to the ancillary rooms. Windows at the base of these structures now employ glass block.

Near the roofline, on the north and south sides of the nave, are a series of rounded-arched windows. Below this, on each side, extensions to the nave exhibit a row of six rectangular windows. Below this, at the base of the building, are six more windows, of which four have been sealed with brick.

At the rear stands a symmetrical gabled section perpendicular to the church's nave. At the south end of this structure there is a chimney which bisects the face. Also, on this face there are five windows and a doorway. The west side of this structure contains eighteen windows, most of which are arched. Three rectangular windows arise out of the sloping roof. Also, on the west side, there is a main doorway. On the north side of this structure there are six pairs of windows. The four windows at the base have had glass block installed.

The connection between the nave and the rear structure provides two doorways. The doorway on the south side appears to have been added later.

The prodigiously elaborate interior appears to reflect the decorative tradition in Poland. Colorful tile flooring, dark-stained pews, and stencilled, gold-leafed plastering all combine to form a unique richness. Light emanates from clerestory windows and stained and painted glass windows along the aisle, which are complemented by hanging electrical lamps. A shallow baldachino, in the altar, is supported by two carved angels. The chancel walls are abundantly decorated with florid paintings and architectural panels of bandwork, cartouches and garlands.

The Immaculate Conception Church is noteworthy for its Romanesque Revival Design. This style of architecture was widely employed and appreciated in Eastern Europe during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The rich superfluity of the interior is most significant. The architectural style of the Immaculate Conception Church epitomized the Polish immigrant community's respect for their cultural heritage.

7. Significance

The Immaculate Conception Church is also significant for its service as a spiritual center for the area's Polish population. The Church was founded in 1919 to accommodate the overflow from St. Hyacinth, a Catholic Church located nine blocks south on McDougall Avenue. In 1920 the parish school was built. The parish first congregated in a converted grocery store. Construction was completed on the Immaculate Conception Church in 1928, when the parish represented 500 families. At that time, over 100 children attended the parish school. In 1970 the Church had a membership of over 500 parishoners. Immaculate Conception presently serves about 40% of the area's Polish community, and a large Albanian population as well. In 1969 the Detroit Common Council recognized Immaculate Conception's "tremendous community service to all the people of Detroit" as a "stabilizing force."